

for orthodox European-style curricula to be imported and adapted; but not for a coherent and relevant system to be developed from first principles which would anchor African universities firmly in the societies whose social and general development they were expected to serve.

The progression of African territories from colonial status to independence is one in which, obviously, the first problem—that of academic freedom from injudicious outside interference—becomes a dominant theme. Sir Eric and his collaborator have studied at length and from first-hand evidence the dispositions made in East and West Africa to ensure that as far as possible universities should retain through the jolts and vicissitudes of an exuberant political scene that serenity and self-control which is the condition of productive existence. Here too they have criticisms to offer; but not perhaps very weighty ones. After all, what constitutional or other arrangements can possibly be invented which would stand up against the jolting of a monolithic People's Convention movement, under the leadership of a Nkrumah? To express indignation at the events of 1962-64 in Ghana is all very well; but it is an exercise which brings a smile to the face of the social anthropologist. How in the world can it be expected that rulers of societies engaged in a process of profound remoulding will endure the presence in their midst of conspicuous, expensive, and highly influential institutions such as universities, claiming privileges which are liable, at any major shift in power relations, to assume a significance quite different from anything in the minds of the European constitution-makers? To resist subversion to the dictates of a ruling party, clan or leader is bound to be taken to mean one of two things: either intellectual alienation from what is going on (all too easy with a foreign implantation, though of more significance in social studies than in natural science) or a covert siding with whatever may exist in the way of forces hostile to the established order. The University of Ghana constitution of 1961 copied faithfully the best British models, in that it provided *inter alia* for a Chancellor, viz.,

the President of the Republic, viz., Kwame Nkrumah. "The charters of most British universities state that the Chancellor is head of the university and in some universities it is the Chancellor who appoints the Vice-Chancellor." In Ghana the Chancellor, at a given moment, began to act as though he was the head and as though the Vice-Chancellor ought to be content to be merely his agent; appointing his own professors, sack up committees to censure publications, and so forth. The authors conclude: "In Africa, constitutions stripped of their conventions, far from being safeguards, can be positively dangerous."

This is undoubtedly true; but it is surely only half the story. What sort of a President of a Republic would the majority of Ghanaians think they had if the President did not demonstrate that the university was not some sort of independent power in the land—and that irrespective of whether or not he was Chancellor? Sir Eric and Dr. Anderson make the additional point that the lay council of the university did not do its job of explaining the university to the community, and that it therefore allowed incomprehension and popular hostility a foothold. The Council failed to protest, failed to resist, seldom issued reports. This is another attempt to find institutional or constitutional explanations for the breakdown of a system. Like the previous one, it is inadequate. Why? Because attempts to explain outlines of performance along these lines leave out of account the one thing to which we would have expected Sir Eric, a botanist writing on educational ecology, to give full weight; namely a social and political context within which the requirements of a sensitive plant from Europe cannot be appreciated, let alone set on an assured basis.

The sensitive plant requires light, humidity, and so on; but the leaves if touched curl up. Children find this surprising and not quite natural. In academic terms, if a hot finger of political interference is poked at the university, the expatriate professors

resign and go back to Europe. In some (not all) European greenhouses the children behave with decorum. But in some communities, subject to the strains of economic and social development, such decorum would be much more exotic than the plant itself. Decorum can be ensured up to a point by artificial means—e.g., careful respect for the objects of foreign aid, or faith in the long-term beneficial effects of training graduates, or perhaps even a vague superstition of a sort no different from what is to be found in, say, Germany. It can also be codified by constitutions. But it can hardly be grounded in the affectionate respect of generations of alumni, or in the tacit consent of politicians, civil servants, and other responsible people. To appreciate this fully, however, it is necessary to have detailed information on social and political forces in a community at a given time.

Accordingly, if we have a major reservation to make about this study, which from some points of view will certainly become a work of reference, it is that its subtitle is misleading. Ecology deals with the relationships between organisms and their environment. This is not a book about the ecology of the universities studied in it; it is mostly about morphology, constitutions, and—in earlier chapters—the manifest ignorance of plant breeders. Not that it would have been possible to include a worthwhile ecological dimension in so long a book without jettisoning much of the massive historical excursions on policy-making for which it would be churlish not to be grateful. But it is odd that there is nowhere a serious attempt to describe firmly the social scene in which the University of Calcutta was planned, grew, hypertrophied, drooped, was doctored, and finally collapsed some time ago. And the same for Africa. The results of bad plant selection are seen—e.g., the bald fact that there were unemployable substandard Bengali graduates—but not the process of interaction between plant and environment which makes this result comprehensible. Of the "sociology of education" mentioned on the dust-jacket there is no more than a tincture—observations such as "in African

countries, as in India, the clerical office job has for a long time enjoyed an exaggerated prestige and it has been difficult to persuade Africans to accord an equally high status to jobs in technology". The reasons for this are not touched on. Social structures are ignored. In the chapters on India the word "caste" appears nowhere, or if it does, so inconspicuously as to have escaped one reader.

This renders some of Sir Eric's arguments rather vulnerable, even when his judgments are sympathetic. It is established that a university system which worked more or less in England did not work in Calcutta. Why not? Because (it is argued) those responsible failed to understand that the model could not be implanted at random. Why not? Because the idea of adaptation to Indian needs did not arise till later (Dacca was luckier); and because the London model led to scandalous standards, which were tolerated by the complicity of local people. But why were they so tolerant? No satisfactory answer is offered, though several could be suggested.

Even then, are explanations of this kind sufficient? Why, for example, should Indianization or Africanization be requisite to success? Most academics can give practical reasons; and indeed merely to raise the question is highly unfashionable, and perhaps suggests an archaic position on cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, Sir Eric offers telling examples of two places (Lovanium and Dakar) which have in his view been surprisingly successful academically, and which make few direct concessions to local culture, and not many to local needs. These are, in fact, thoroughly European institutions under tropical skies—and highly appreciated as such. It is suggested that in the case of Dakar this is because of the practical advantages for the African graduate in having access to the same recognition that is available to Frenchmen in France (but what was the London special relationship scheme if not a device to bring about similar effects?). The not unimportant matter of strong financial support is also touched on.

Everyone can accept the last point. But an additional and equally important point would be that over a fair period of time French administration in Senegal, though in some ways arrogant, has been characterized since the days of Faidherbe by the absence of two very British qualities—namely, condescension and diffidence. Such qualities are regularly reflected in institutions. Sir Eric is not very much more indulgent towards the "special relationship" arrangement than he is towards Lord Macaulay. It is arguable that if the latter was the epitome of condescension, the former (and indeed the whole paraphernalia of exportable higher education from Britain in recent decades) embodies many symptoms of diffidence, as well as some very un-Gallie condescension. Thus Sir Eric views with disavow the unsuccessful desire of some Africans to enforce the study of Latin, at a time when that language was still a badge of educational respectability in Britain. But what was this desire, if not the expression of a wish, admirable or repellent or pathetic according to how one sees it, not to be treated to a cheapened article of "pass" and "honours" courses, which in its bearing on African colleges has on occasion suggested the most condescending and offensive kind of distinction—a distinction which, incidentally, exists in no other university systems, other than those of British inspiration? And—as regards diffidence—how often have

official reports not included phrases as "African in spirit, reality as well as in name, and a mere colonial institution of British University"? Such a self-expression, it may be said, was never on the lips of French administrators up-to-date inquiry into the principles of political obligation. Preferably, on the model of Paris or Nancy, Condescension and diffidence are features of an ex-colonialist's attitude which must not be overlooked in study of social background and educational ventures.

In post-philosophical scepticism about the attitudes towards a central philosophy, a subject for rational discussion, if any, should British universities involve themselves with the thought that the responsibility of making political philosophy a central subject is a subject for philosophical fashions are evanescent, higher education has not in its statements can be rationally discussed which is one reason why it is worthy of the rationalization of a central subject. It is a rational agent than to consider what export as compared with things are valuable, and to deliberate why the latter (and how we can achieve them in our own life together).

This is a promising "apology" and it is immediately followed by half-a-dozen "sections" (for Mr. Lucas renounces "chapters") which are of great interest. Methodologically a traditionalist, he begins by making certain statements about human nature which he "believes to be true" and which, if true, condition what is politically possible and indicate what may be politically desirable. These axioms are as follows:

Human beings, as we know them, are often selfish, but sometimes unselfish; their judgement is fallible, but sometimes in the course of argument different people come to hold the same view, which is, as far as we can see, reasonable and right; they are indolent in their complexity and aspirations, but finite in their capacities and achievements; they occupy the same public external world, but are each the centre of a private perspective, may necessarily share with others; they have values, which are neither necessarily the same for all, nor actually different for each; they can help one another, and need to, but can hurt one another, and often do.

The rest of the book is supposed to represent a working out of the consequences, in terms of political organization and behaviour, of these fundamental characteristics of human beings. Most readers, one suspects, will follow this process of "rationalization" with increasing disappointment and occasional exasperation. Mr. Lucas appears to possess little interest in countries

J. R. LUCAS: *The Principles of Politics*. 380pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. 50s.

other than England and a cynically narrow idea of what constitutes the subject-matter of "politics". The writer a great deal—much of it very pertinent—about judges and courts, but very little about parties and nothing at all about elections. Moreover, although one soon becomes aware that he is in favour of "freedom" (the nature of which he discusses at considerable length), one never gets the slightest idea of what his views are about democracy—surely one of the most challenging phenomena for the student of political obligation. Not one of the seventy-eight sections is devoted to the subject, and in the index there is nothing to separate "de Gaulle" from "D'Entreves".

Even some of his favourite themes are very oddly presented and developed. On the British Constitution, for instance, he writes like a man of the day—or even earlier—who has made the mistake of straying into the twentieth century. What, one wonders, will those who have sat at the feet of Jennings or Macintosh make of the following?

Only if a Bill is vitiated by inter-constitutional or wickedness should a Constitution. A monarch interprets the law, and is not a law-giver. Provided a Bill is within the bounds of reason and morality, the Queen should approve it, even though it is in fact what she thinks is best, wise, prudent, expedient or right. If she approves a Bill, it will be the force of law, and she will have a legal, and well-founded *prima facie* moral, obligation also to approve, to the extent of obeying it, that if she were to refuse her assent, it would not have the force of law, and we should be under no obligation to obey it. If she had refused her assent to a Bill, she would not have to leave to give in and might well lose her throne. But if she were right, the government would have to go, and the unconstitutional or wicked law would have been in force. There would have been a rebellion without the loss of a single life.

It may, perhaps, be gathered from the tenor of this rather extraordinary passage that Mr. Lucas is in love with a political way of life where "powers" were nicely balanced, the effect that the development of nuclear weapons has made armies "unusable" against civilians at home; since although "many officers in the Pentagon might be members of the John Birch Society and might wish to overthrow the power of the President and Congress," they

could hardly do so by dispatching an H-bomb to the Capitol or the White House.

There is also a fair amount of "argument" which does little more than reveal the existence of unacknowledged premises. For example, Mr. Lucas is not very fond of officials, whose "inefficiency," he believes, "was borne in on the public by the various experiments in nationalization and State control in the years after the war". The passage which he devotes to proving the inherent inefficiency of officialdom must be read in the light of this rather dogmatic assertion. As for communists, they fall well outside the limits of his tolerance. While "socialist school-masters," he concedes,

have a right that their political opinions be disregarded by Conservative governments... communists, Nazis and fascists are quite rightly declared from occupying any position where they could corrupt the minds of the young.

The argument which he produces in support of this somewhat stark distinction is one quite unworthy of a man of scholarly reputation: that schoolteachers' opinions are naturally an object of concern to parents and governors, much as politicians' opinions are of concern to voters; only, we artificially abridge this concern to some extent to avoid greater evils.

Others, from whom his tolerance is withdrawn are those who engage in "the proclamation of the sacred mysteries". Here the ground for exclusion is that

it is clearly reasonable to a Christian community to set great store by its behaviour towards God, and in seeking to ensure that none of its members should deliberately desecrate a divine institution.

Another source of defective argument is his failure adequately to examine and to interrelate the brutal categories usually dignified by initial capitals in which he thinks. Thus the statement that "we hamper the efficiency of the government by securing individuals against arbitrary arrest or dispossession of their property" could hardly be made by anyone who

THE OBLIGATIONS OF POLITICS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2 1967

Mr. Lucas is not only pre-"behaviourist", he is almost pre-Wallis. For all the keen and often subtle logic with which he presents his arguments, it becomes increasingly obvious that the overall logical structure of the work lacks firm articulation. The further one moves from his original statement about human nature, the stranger is one's suspicion that he is less concerned with the development of its implications than with the expression of his ideas. In the end, there remains a rather insular collection of political maxims, deriving their inspiration from that least high and most sentimental of political theorists, Edmund Burke, in whom the author specifically pays tribute in Section 78. Thus a humanist appears to begin as a strictly logical exercise evolves into a basically conservative and highly idiosyncratic essay on the "What I Believe" variety.

It is not possible, however, to complain that Mr. Lucas's political beliefs are uninteresting or ill-expressed. As a statement of a liberal-minded and traditionalist, if somewhat off-beat, view of the British Constitution, this book has much to recommend it. Moreover, it contains many passages which give the well-established maxims of political wisdom a lapidary expression worthy of a MacIntyre or a Hobbes. On the Control of Armies, for instance, Mr. Lucas writes:

The profession of arms should be esteemed, but not too highly. Respect for liberty not only because free citizens were unwilling to serve as soldiers, but because their careers were all too willing to give military command. If the army provides a path to political power, it will attract people who want political power; and it is dangerous to put coercive power in the hands of those who want political power, because if they get it, they will have too much power and if they do not, they will be tempted to rebel.

On the other hand, he will occasionally produce a statement containing a nugget of wisdom that it would hardly deserve a child. One such is to the effect that the development of nuclear weapons has made armies "unusable" against civilians at home; since although "many officers in the Pentagon might be members of the John Birch Society and might wish to overthrow the power of the President and Congress," they

could hardly do so by dispatching an H-bomb to the Capitol or the White House.

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A good journalist spends much of his time choosing and assessing sources. His success depends on his ability to judge which sources to rely on, which to reject, which to view with suspicion. A good historian undertakes much the same sort of process. It does not follow, however, that each can do the other's job.

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AFRICAN ORIGINS

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many of his judgments will be accepted. For example, he sees African culture and development as derivative rather than original, a much greater extent than modern historians of the continent. Furthermore, his need to compress much into a small compass leads to some odd generalizations. In Ghana, the Mende and Songhai are all "much alike". He writes, for example, a statement which is certainly questioned by scholars.

Mr. Howe tells a good story, and is readable. It is questionable whether the story he tells is the story. As a pilot through African history, he should be read with caution.

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CHAPMAN AND HALL

Fiction

HUNGARIAN UNDERWORLD

TIBOR DÉRY: *The Portuguese Princess and other Stories*. Translated by Kathleen Szasz. 224pp. Calder and Boyars. 30s.

For those who know Tibor Déry only from his short novel *Niki*, which was published as a Penguin paperback, and the few odd stories which were printed and reprinted after Déry's imprisonment in 1957, he might have seemed to be a writer excessively preoccupied with politics or rather with the adverse effects of political interference in the lives of ordinary people. In this he has followed a tradition: it is difficult to find a Hungarian writer of real talent who has managed to remain indifferent to the twists and turns of history, or who could afford to look the other way when his fellow men were caught in the carefully laid traps of this or that totalitarian regime. Mr. Déry, however, is much more than a distinguished social critic or a political firebrand and the new collection of his stories proves his strength as a writer committed first of all to his own story.

With the exception of the strange and lovely tale "The Portuguese Princess", these are stories about simple people living in Budapest during the last winter of the war when

the Hungarian capital was besieged by the Russians and the civilian population was buddled together in badly lit cellars waiting for its fate to be decided. Mr. Déry portrays this makeshift underworld with an impressive realism and with a nervous humour occasionally verging on the macabre. The war and the terror resulting from it are used as a background against which human situations and actions unfold, often with the force and beauty of a parable. Aunt Anne, who dies to save her desecrated son's life, addresses her friends in simple words which are like a timeless condemnation of the timeless cowardice of human beings: "even the best among you claim salvation on the grounds that you have neither cheated nor stolen".

"The Gay Funeral", the last and most recent story in this collection, is a fine example of Mr. Déry's peculiar blend of burlesque and tragedy. It is about the last days of an old artist whose calm acceptance of the inevitable is contrasted with the lachrymose bistrionics of his wife and the

enormous upheaval caused by her preparations for a funeral which involves both the remnants of Budapest society and the worried representatives of the new social order. In the main witty and satirical, this story contains some moving passages; one particularly remembers the dying man's conversation with a young woman whom he secretly loves.

Kathleen Szasz's translation is good and reliable, but the dust cover carries an extremely poor drawing which may frighten off some likely readers. This would be a pity; Tibor Déry is one of the last living masters of that great tradition of European realism that we associate with the name of Thomas Mann, and he deserves our close attention.

The Society of Authors announces that the Travelling Scholarship Award for 1966 has been made to Mr. Charles Causley. The 1966 Tom-Gallon Trust Award has been made to Gillian Edwards for her short story "Evening in September".

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

ROBERT LAIT: *Mrs. Hardwick's Private War*. 218pp. Heinemann. JOHN MORRESSY: *The Blackboard Cavalier*. 209pp. Gollancz.

These two novels take the reader for a ramble round the maze corridors of the modern educational set-up here and in the United States. Both writers choose to tackle their theme with a sort of hysterical light-heartedness, but the macabre quality of their subject-matter remains a persistent presence, breathing coldly down the necks of both of them as they describe not wholly impossible antics and make rueful jokes.

Mr. Lait, the Englishman, concerns himself with what have come to be called the ancillary services of education. Jenkin, an inadequate person given to day-dreaming, is pushed into the front line in the battle between Authority and the taught, foul-mouthed bus-conductress Mrs. Hardwick over her semi-idiot boy Sidney. Authority wants Sidney away from home and in a special boarding-school; Mrs. Hardwick, whose maternal instincts are as strong as they are misguided, wants him at home so that he can plague the local school headmaster and get his proper ration of chips and birds. Both teachers and administrators are routed

by Mrs. Hardwick after a series of adventures. Mr. Lait continues effective moments, but he is so material and spreads it out too far that his characters—they are all of them or time-servers—drop a lack of contrast.

With *The Blackboard Cavalier* are still supping on educational rorts, but this time those of the room and common room rather than those of administration. The hero is a desperate jockey, Mr. Morresey is interested in the art of shrewd things to say about a party though that he has done cast his ideas in the form of a flat thrash about in thickets of verbosity and over-decorates with a figurativeness—"with all the grand and none of the grandeur of a glacier". This is not to say he has not a certain verbal flair, but by itself is not enough to give and convincingness to Ernie, the full-time substitute teacher at Park High School, as he is which is very comprehensive and storming "characters" who are cribbed vigorously enough but movements, in their various efforts against the oppressed, fantasy-like Ernie, are puppet-like.

AFTER ALL

JACOB PALUDAN: *Jorgen Stei*. 724pp. Translated by Carl Berg. The University of Wisconsin Press. (American University Publishers Group). £1

Jorgen Stei, the massive Danish dingsman first published in parts in 1932 and 1933, is now interest more as an historical than as a work of imagination. I cumulative effect is to establish a sober, faithful portrait of a derided bourgeois family floating in the erratic social currents of Europe after the First World War, recreating the feelings of "a generation that could not help stumbling all start".

Symbolically, young Jorgen, sixteen, puts on a dinner-jacket the first time on the night that parents' party is interrupted by the of the Archduke Ferdinand's assassination in Sarajevo. Through book his education proceeds, a flickering newsreel pattern of events. For Jorgen up to the age of thirty remains a student, alive but unable to formulate a philosophy of his own, researching spasmodically into the history of art, poetry, conditions of the working man, the healing power of nature, but unwilling to commit himself to a career or a profession. He is irascible, in his dealings with the women of life, who represent three types: 1920s femininity; Naana, a landlady's daughter, lovingly gentle and so selfless that her death seems inevitable; Ellen, an aggressive career woman, Lily, a short-haired bright young thing with expensive tastes.

The whole Stei family are Jorgen's inability to act decisively in the postwar world. His mother, a comfortable Jutland housewife, is 1914 is irretrievably shattered; his father declines from a senior official to a quack, the quack Otto, is a get-rich-quick lawyer, lacks the ruthless flair to be a successful confidence trickster; his mother marries a parvenu who feeds on only when Jorgen, now married to a country girl and scratching a living keeping chickens on a smallholding, is about to become a father. He is of a family once more that he knows any direction to his life. "As if he were his father speaking without he thought, the only true happiness comes through observance of the only right road leads through a duty's mill".

It is only that this realistic account of young Europeans having their glimpse of jazz, Lindbergh, D. Griffith and American salaciousness should have waited more than twenty years for a translation which is clearly conscientious in its clumsy.

Fiction

ART OF DARKNESS

PAUL BOWLES: *Up Above The World*. 223pp. Macmillan. MARIET: *Love With a Few Hairs*. Tayed and Paul Bowles. 176pp. Peter Owen. 30s. each.

Paul Bowles's new book, *Up Above The World*, is in a vein which will be familiar to his admirers. Once again we encounter the vacationing American couple, this time in Latin America, who are slowly sucked into a vortex of horror until beyond their comprehension. The exotic reveals first its fascination, then its fatality. At the same time, husband tugs against wife and wife against husband, each interpreting their strange and unassimilable experience in a different key. The bonds between them become taut and frayed, so that their concentration turns inward on the web which binds them together, rather than outward to the web in which they are both trapped. The will to escape is overcome by a dreadful mesmerized inertia.

At the root of Paul Bowles's view of the world is a vision of the fragility of the social norms of the North American middle class when confronted with the chaotic threat which surges out of the desert and the jungle. The natural world becomes conflated with the dream world: both have their hidden, nightmarish forces, much stronger than the airy, vacuous substance of thought and word. Thus the sulphur fumes from the hallucinogenic drugs, scopalamine and LSD, it begins to seem impossible to tell fantasy from reality; reality which had seemed so assured back in the United States. The journey away from home takes the travellers much further than they had anticipated.

The buzzards wait; the spider pounces. However, it should be said that *Up Above The World* is not as fine a book as Paul Bowles's early achievements, *The Sheltering Sky* or *Let It Come Down*. Partly this is because the Latin American milieu, though he has used it previously in short stories, never seems so present, so concretely sensuous as the North Africa of his other books. It has a somewhat schematic quality, as though the burning sun and dunes of Morocco had been extended to fit a new context. And this abstractness of landscape and climate is accentuated by the abstractness of the plot, whose mechanics, sharp and angular, focus their way out through the fabric of the narrative. As a result, the end of the book is unsatisfactory; the chain of murders, which had seemed at first dictated by the implicit viciousness of nature, symptoms of an underlying disease, are reconstituted explicitly as a logical chain of planned events. The chaotic evil is crammed into one man's brain; the structure of the novel becomes transparent.

The strongest part of the book is the treatment of Taylor and the Day Shade, the American couple; the weakest part that which deals with their tormentors in Puerto Barlo and the capital. Even in his earlier books it has been the impingement of the local world on the incomers which has been the centre of attention; the structures of the local world itself have been rather

simplified. He has tended to see the Arabs themselves, for instance, almost as incarnations of moral forces, rather than as precise individuals.

Recently Mr. Bowles has turned to transcribing and editing tape-recorded stories told to him by Arabs. The first of these, Driss Ben Hamed Chahadi's *A Life Full of Hairs*, had a complex structure derived from the folk-tale tradition. The second, *Love With a Few Hairs*, was told to Mr. Bowles by Mohammed Mariet, and is more a brief personal account, in which Mr. Mariet tells how he hired a witch to make a girl fall in love with him, how he married her, how she was bewitched out of love by her mother and how she eventually left her. In the background, paying him ostensibly for his work as hotel barman, is his rich English homosexual protector, Mr. David. Mr. Mariet's account is unashamedly readable as authentic evocation almost always is, but one cannot help thinking it would be easily improved if it was one of an inter-related set of narratives, as in Oscar Lewis's *The Children of Sumer*. The wife, the mother, Mr. David, all presumably have their own versions of the events which would give a new perspective on that of Mr. Mariet, reducing it to one plane of a multi-dimensional picture. But here, of course, we begin to leave the novel and enter the preserves of anthropology and inter-personal psychology.

DREAMING IT UP

Bombolini, a secret student of Machiavelli, stands for the variety of individual life against Captain Von Prim, whose narrow concept of honour drives him into the arms of Nietzsche. Unfortunately, the novelist has sold out the peasants' sufferings. What imaginative and moral life the novel has lies in its horrifying torture scenes, and in the townspeople's appalling dilemma when forced to choose from among themselves a scapegoat to die for their wine. But these scenes are buried in the patronizing whimsicality which America too easily extends towards the Old Countries of its non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants. Mr. Crichton has fearfully hedged his bet: frightened of his subject's power, he minimizes both human dignity and the townspeople by regressing into the past, warm sentimentality of *The Little World of Don Camillo*.

GHOULING

GEORGE LANNING: *The Pedestal*. 192pp. Michael Joseph. 25s. *The Pedestal* is a sure-footed exercise in one variant of the Gothic novel. Its success lies somewhere between Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*. That is, although it at times moves the horror-thriller towards a Jamesian exploration of sinister moral dimensions, finally, like Hitchcock, it offers a rational explanation of its mysteries. By refusing any explanation in these terms, James forces his reader into the symbolic ramifications of his fable, whereas Hitchcock finally channels the threat into a psychological cause, schizophrenia, so that mystery is reduced to a comfortable thrill-in retrospect.

In Mr. Lanning's novel the horrors stem from a large, ugly, claw-footed pedestal, acquired dirt-cheap at an auction by John and Eleanor. Once in their house at Oldchurch, the pedestal seems to take on a life of its own—John discovers that it moves about at night. Oldchurch is a small tight community; its inhabitants live on gossip gathered at the sides of their luxurious swimming-pools, at their circulating cocktail party, and from a ubiquitous cleaning-woman. The wealthy and idle narrator, John, is recuperating from an enforced stay at a mental institution. As the novel progresses it

becomes clear that he is Eleanor's pawn and that she is in league with the local minister and his wife.

A brutal and senseless murder shocks the neighbourhood, and rumour points to the upper reaches of Oldchurch's rich, decadent establishment. The conclusion is sufficiently violent and grisly, involving the pedestal, a massive girandole, and two more deaths. *The Pedestal* is a splendidly gruesome, and often witty, entertainment.

FOOLING

LESLIE STEPHAN: *A Dam for Nothing*. 245pp. Hutchinson. 25s. This is a funny and telling little fable about the hazards of helping the underdeveloped. The dam of the title is not of Aswan proportions but in the Middle Eastern village of Nothing. The Cadillac bearing Mr. and Mrs. Calabash, a pair of unabashed American do-gooders, breaks down nearby, and he with cigarettes. She, with her aspirins, gradually cajole the reluctant villagers into helping them build a dam in the river to irrigate the soil during the annual drought. Experience should have taught them that as soon as they have left for the Punjab the villagers will let the stones slip and all will gradually revert to the accustomed acidity, but the Calabashes are not easily put off.

Leslie Stephan, who is married to a specialist in economic development and who has lived in the Middle East, manages a comic caricature of the corrupt and sleepy regime, the absurdly passive and self-absorbed villagers, the pompous semi-educated townies, and the eternally American American, while at the same time granting everyone real sympathy and understanding. Mrs. Calabash may wear low cotton dresses with plunging necklines, but she also cures the babies of dysentery; Pierre, the Communist-type trouble-maker, may think in terms of slogans but he does start to teach the children to read. This is a far from earnest novel but there is a lot of sense in it.

Ediciones Destino, Barcelona, have reissued Alvaro Cunqueiro's novel *Los cráneos del Suckante* (188pp.) in their Colección Ancora y Dolfin. It won the Premio de la Crítica when it was originally published in 1959.

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LAUGHING GAS TO MINER'S LAMP

Sir HAROLD HARTLEY: *Humphrey Davy*. 160pp. Nelson. 35s.

Sir Humphrey Davy was safely buried within the two volumes of J. A. Paris's *Life* the year after his death, and was exhumed and reburied by his brother, John Davy, in another two volumes five years later. Since then T. E. Thorpe, J. C. Gregory, J. P. Kendall and Miss Anne Treneer have all written valuable appreciations of his life and work from different points of view. He remains, however, an enigmatic figure and even if this new study were not needed to fill an essential place in the series of British Men of Science which Sir Gavin de Beer is editing, a new assessment would not come amiss. It is all the more welcome when made by so eminent a chemist as Sir Harold Hartley, for in this series the biographical details supply merely the framework for an account of the scientific achievements.

"The most romantic of scientists", in Sir Harold's judgment, Davy was born into a Cornish family who sometimes thought of themselves as gentlemen and sometimes as yeomen. Himself a poet of some quality, he enjoyed the friendship of Coleridge and Southey, and Wordsworth not only sent him the proofs of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* but also modified the preface of the 1802 edition to take account of one of Davy's lectures in which the intellectual kinship of science and poetry is emphasized. In that preface he looked forward to a time when "The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, the mineralogist will be as popular objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed". Davy was then at the Royal Institution, having served his apprenticeship in the newly founded Pneumatic Institute at Bristol. It was at the Royal Institution that his greatest work was done, and his brilliant lectures there established a tradition which has continued to the present day.

His marriage in 1812, three days after he received the accolade, to a wealthy Scottish widow, was not a success, for their temperaments clashed. It is a tribute to his international standing, and perhaps a testimony to the more civilized manners of an earlier age, that he was given passports for a great Continental tour from 1813 to 1815 despite the war between England and France; and earlier in the war, in 1807, the French Institute had awarded him Napoleon's prize for his investigation of chemical changes produced by the voltaic current, that is, by electricity. He coveted the Presidency of the Royal Society, and obtained it in 1820 after the withdrawal of all other candidates save the undistinguished Lord Colchester. He was taken ill at Rome in 1829 and died in Geneva, having left behind him a book, *Consolations in Travel or The Last Days of a Philosopher*.

Davy's place in the history of science is secure. From the discovery of nitrous oxide ("laughing gas") at Bristol in 1799 to the invention of the miner's safety lamp in 1815 there stands to his credit an immense record of achievement which is not merely of theoretical interest but has also had a profound effect upon the modern world. According to Sir Harold Hartley, Davy began his researches at one of the most exciting moments of chemical history. The theory of phlogiston, which had dominated chemistry for almost a century, was giving way to the new system of Lavoisier based on the accurate weighing of the constituents of chemical change. His own break

with Lavoisier's theory that all contain oxygen, and his discovery of oxygen from the bosom of the literary and cultural hierarchy, were of the same importance. His isolation of potassium and sodium in 1808 hardly comprehensible outside Lavoisier's prophecy that "the most exciting discovery that no more lasting effect than its systematic publicity would have had, but history we can see, however, who controlled admission to the chemical changes brought about by electric currents. Berzelius, not only the Jewish middle class of Europe, to which both he and intuition, said that with a system, also the socialist and communist intellectuals, who were only too ready to hail the great critic of the status quo. Could any hero of the left have lost his supporters more quickly than by remaining silent about Hitler?

"Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein", however profoundly meant, was hardly a joke calculated to appeal in shillings a week, and he himself benefited not a little from the younger man's more systematic interest in the great man's passion, wit, sovereign mastery of the German Continental tour, and when his ideas, had constantly to struggle against the growing egomania of the take down his certificate of the Royal Society. Davy ordered the put it up, and was elected with one black ball despite Davy's vassalage.

Sir Harold Hartley's intention was to give Faraday a laboratory assistant at the Royal Institution (at a salary of twenty shillings a week), and he himself benefited not a little from the younger man's more systematic interest in the great man's passion, wit, sovereign mastery of the German Continental tour, and when his ideas, had constantly to struggle against the growing egomania of the take down his certificate of the Royal Society. Davy ordered the put it up, and was elected with one black ball despite Davy's vassalage.

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THE GREAT OUTSIDER

CAROLINE KOHN: *Karl Kraus*. 353pp. Stuttgart: Metzler. DM. 36.

Thirty years after his death, the great outsider is being firmly folded into the bosom of the literary and cultural establishment he fought during his lifetime. Karl Kraus did his best to avoid such a fate. He wrote what was often barely comprehensible outside the municipal boundaries of Vienna. He attacked not only the press, whose most exciting discovery that no more lasting effect than its systematic publicity would have had, but history we can see, however, who controlled admission to the chemical changes brought about by electric currents. Berzelius, not only the Jewish middle class of Europe, to which both he and intuition, said that with a system, also the socialist and communist intellectuals, who were only too ready to hail the great critic of the status quo. Could any hero of the left have lost his supporters more quickly than by remaining silent about Hitler?

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ter Benjamin, Adorno, Lucien Goldmann, Maximilien Rubel who acquired—perhaps because obliged to do so by the master's behaviour—a slightly greater distance than the entirely orthodox. This is useful, for much the best really critical work on Kraus has come from this direction: from Brecht's famous aphorism to Benjamin's brilliant essay. A good deal of Mrs. Kohn's book is still devoted to justifying Kraus against the numerous criticisms which have been made (and not always illegitimately) against him. It is obviously not a work of hagiography, but the author is not unaware that there is a halo to be seen.

This is a pity. If the time has not yet come when Kraus no longer needs disciples and defenders, it cannot be far off. The sort of champaignship he has too often received may be important to help an unknown to become known, but when it is applied to a writer whose stature and role nobody would seriously seek to deny any longer, it runs the risk of turning him into a public monument. Nothing becomes invisible more rapidly than statues; but Kraus is a writer whom the twentieth century cannot afford to take for granted.

Mrs. Kohn has written a useful rather than an outstanding book. For those who know nothing of Kraus and little of his environment, it will supply an ample and clear summary of his life, works, polemics and context, though her historical observations are sometimes curious. It does not seem to add much of substance to what was already known, and leaves some biographical details in obscurity. Perhaps it would have been better if such a work had not yet been written. Perhaps the emergence of Kraus as an established figure made it inevitable that it should have been.

There is another sense in which Kraus has not quite established himself yet. He is still very much the property of that small but influential band of disciples who championed him in the days of his underground reputation, and their heirs. Mrs. Kohn belongs to them, though she seems to have been influenced largely by their Marxist bias (Brecht, Wal-

ter and Nebeuchadnezzar was essential. The editor, Dr. Walther Huder, who is in charge of the Georg Kaiser archives in Berlin, has also unearthed an early verse play, *Schellenkönig*. As for the later plays, the choice is as good as any. They include the striking anti-war play *Lederkuppe*, the comedy *Kolportage* (ironically, one of the few plays of Kaiser to be seen occasionally in the German theatre today), and two plays written in exile. Besides these dramatic works, we have for the first time a fairly complete collection of Kaiser's theoretical writings as well as a number of film synopses and short stories. Lastly, there are some sixty poems written in the last year of his life—wild outcries of despair in which the dramatist finally revealed himself behind the countless masks of his characters. The editor's *Nachwort* and a full bibliography of Kaiser's writings conclude the volume. What is still lacking is a critical edition of all his plays, indispensable for a full assessment of his place in modern drama.

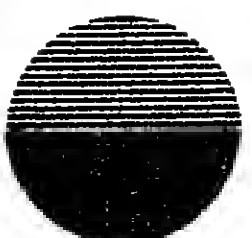
Clearly Kaiser's vision of a new man "grew from the revolutionary impetus of German Expressionism. He made his strongest impact in the years of social and spiritual upheaval following the revolution of 1918. But he was the only one to sustain the intellectual white heat of Expressionism in play after play long after the movement had spent its force. However, the emphasis shifted from the social plane to the intimate sphere of the individual: only in the union of perfect love could man's rebirth find fulfillment.

In 1933 his plays were banished from the stage; in 1938 he fled to Switzerland, where he spent the war years and died in 1945. The rise of Hitler and the horrors of the war roused him to violent protest against the inhumanity of man. His last plays are suffused with an ever deepening pessimism—the despair of the prophet who saw his vision shattered by the folly and indifference of the world.

We have moved a long way from the messianic fervour as well as from the highly charged intellectualism in the theatre of Kaiser's period. Through his insistence on the prevalence of "thinking", his appeal to the social conscience of the audience, he had a direct influence on Brecht, who throughout his life held him in deep respect. And both Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt owe much to Georg Kaiser.

The present volume claims to give a representative cross-section of Kaiser's work. Certainly the inclusion of such plays as *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von Morgens bis Mitternacht*, *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von Morgens bis Mitternacht*, the two parts of *Gus*, richly deserves.

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